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Research News for the U.S. Travel Industry

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TRAVEL PRINTOUT

US Travel Data Center

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Summer Travel to Reach Record High

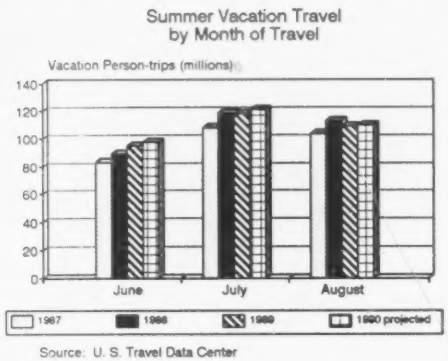
Americans will be traveling in record numbers this summer, predicted the Data Center at its annual Summer Vacation Travel Forecast press conference in Orlando, Florida.

"The record levels of vacation travel forecasted for this summer can be attributed in part to strong summer vacation intentions reported in the spring," said Dr. Suzanne Cook, executive director of the Data Center. "In addition vacation travel has increased in the first quarter of 1990 compared to last year."

For the first time, the press conference was held in conjunction with the American Automobile Association (AAA), who released their Memorial Day Weekend Outlook, at the soon-to-open Universal theme-park in Orlando.

According to the Summer Vacation Travel Forecast, more than 329 million vacation person-trips are forecasted, a 2 percent increase from last Summer. This represents nearly a 28 percent increase from the Summer of 1982, when vacation travel hit a recession-induced low of 259 million person-trips. The Data Center predicts that:

- There will be a 2 percent increase in Summer vacation travel in 1990, from 322 million in Summer 1989 to a projected 329 million in 1990.
- Vacation trips will rise nearly 4 percent over last summer to 148 million.
- An average travel party size of 2.2 people per trip, down from 2.3 in 1989.
- July will be the most popular month to travel this summer, reaching a record number of more than 121 million person-trips; 110 million will be taken in August and 98 million person-trips in June.
- The National Travel Survey revealed that 32 percent of consumers who traveled last summer have budgeted more for summer vacation this year, while 53 percent have budgeted the same.



Source: U. S. Travel Data Center

- More than 42 percent of summer vacation person-trips will involve stays at hotels/motels, a moderate increase from last year. Friends/relatives will host 39 percent of person-trips and camper/trailer/RV will attract 11 percent.
- There will be a continuing trend towards shorter trips. Last summer 47 percent of vacationers took trips lasting less than a week, compared to 50 percent in 1988.
- Corresponding with the increased popularity of short trips is the trend toward trips taken closer to home. This summer the largest share of vacations taken in the U.S., 56 percent, will be less than 500 miles round-trip.
- Day trips will account for 9 percent of all summer vacation travel, increasing to 28 million person-trips. Trips of one night will reach 36 million, 11 percent of all travel.
- Travel by car, truck and RV is expected to increase 2 percent, up to 270 million person-trips from 264 million in summer 1989. Air travel is expected to maintain the level reached last year, accounting for 15 percent of all vacation travel.
- Travel to visit friends and relatives will be the most popular purposes of travel this summer, accounting for 36 percent of all vacation travel.
- For the first time in three years, oceans and beaches topped the list of most likely destinations.
- Regionally, the Southeast will attract 33 percent of all vacation person-trips this summer, followed by the West with 22 percent, and the Midwest, which will host 15 percent.
- Departures to Europe are expected to increase 4 to 5 percent this summer and travel to other destinations outside the U.S. is also expected to grow or maintain last summer's levels, based on data from the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration.

Higher Lodging, Airline Fares Increase Cost of March Travel

For the second consecutive month the overall cost of travel in the U.S. rose 1.5 percent due largely to the increased rates of lodging and airline fares, according to the Data Center's latest Travel Price Index (TPI).

The TPI, which measures seasonally unadjusted changes in the cost of travel in the U.S. grew to 132.8 (1982 - 84 = 100) during March.

For comparison, the overall cost of goods and services Americans purchased as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 0.5 percent to 128.7.

Travel Price Index and Components

March 1990 TPI Component	Monthly % Change February 1990 to March 1990	Annual % Change March 1989 to March 1990
Transportation	0.3	9.7
Airline Fares	2.7	10.3
Other Intercity Trans.	0.3	2.6
Intracity Public Trans.	0.0	6.5
Motor Fuel	-1.4	9.6
Lodging	2.6	5.5
Food and Beverages away from home	1.1	4.9
Entertainment	0.6	7.1
TRAVEL PRICE INDEX	1.5	6.2
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	0.5	5.2

Source: U.S. Travel Data Center and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Airline fares showed the highest increase in March jumping 2.7 percent, even though overall transportation costs rose only 0.3 percent. Lodging also showed an increase, rising 2.6 percent. For the second straight month, the only decrease in travel costs occurred in motor fuel, which dropped 1.4 percent in March. Entertainment costs showed a slight rise at 0.6 percent, while food and beverages increased 1.1 percent.

Over the past 12 month period, the TPI rose 6.2 percent, influenced by a 10.3 percent jump in airline fares and a 5.5 percent increase in lodging. Even though motor fuel showed the only decrease for the second consecutive month it still showed an increase of 9.6 percent over the last 12 months.

February Travel Rises 6 Percent

There were 67.1 million person-trips taken by U.S. residents for the month of February, a six percent increase over February 1989, according to the Data Center's latest National Travel Survey (NTS) results. (A person-trip measures each person traveling 100 miles or more away from home.)

Automobile travel jumped nearly 7 percent with more than 52 million person-trips. Air travel declined slightly in February 1990, but those who traveled by air flew farther. The average round-trip distance for air travel rose to 2470 miles from 2250 miles in February 1989, according to the Air Transport Association.

The largest increase occurred in weekend travel, which totaled more than 40 million person-trips. Business travel jumped 12 percent over February 1989, and were longer in duration, averaging 3.4 nights this year compared to 2.8 nights last year.

Business trips also involved longer distances with the average round-trip distance jumping from 1120 miles in February 1989 to 1170 miles in February 1990.

Pleasure travel decreased about 1 percent this past February. Vacation person-trips, a sub-group of pleasure travel, also showed a slight decrease in February 1990.

The average duration of a trip increased to 3.8 nights in February 1990, compared to 3.4 nights in the previous year. Vacation travel showed the largest increase, jumping from 3.7 nights to 4.3 nights per trip.

Travel to the Great Lakes Region surged to 7.7 million person-trips in February 1990. Travel to the Southeast Region remained strong while travel to both the Northeast and West Regions grew moderately, posting year-to-date increases of 4 and 7 percent, respectively. The Midwest showed a decline in travelers in the first two months of 1990.

Hotel/motel person-trips rose nearly 8 percent from February 1989 to February 1990. The average duration in hotels/motels, however, dropped from 3.6 nights in February 1989 to 3.1 nights in February 1990, as more travelers are taking more frequent but shorter hotel/motel trips.

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Dr. Suzanne D. Cook, Executive Director
Scott M. Dring, Editor

TRAVEL PRINTOUT reports on Data Center projects, national travel research conducted by other organizations and trends in the U.S. Travel Industry. Subscriptions are $75 per year; Foreign countries, $80 per year, payable in U.S. funds. ISSN: 0744-6233.

TEIM Update

The Data Center will be completing the forecasting component of the Travel Economic Impact Model (TEIM) by the end of the month, according to Dr. William Fleming, manager of economic research.

The forecasting model enables the Data Center to make short-term and long-term predictions about travel volume and expenditures. The model has the capability to make projections about the economic impact of travel for the country, states and metropolitan areas.

Undergoing expansion and improvement, the Data Center's Travel Economic Impact Model (TEIM) is a statistical model that provides annual estimates of travel-generated spending and its impact on national, state and local economies.

Following revision, the model will be a more effective and flexible tool for assessing the impact travel has on the economy.

For more information about the Travel Economic Impact Model (TEIM) and its capabilities, contact Dr. William Fleming, manager of economic research, at (202) 293-1040.

Discoveries...

Travel Agent Magazine has completed its 1990 vacation travel study. The study entitled, "The 1990 Vacation Travel Study: The Vacation Decision Process from the Consumer's Point of View," is an independent study to explore the vacationer's decision-making process. The study will be released in a series of editorial pieces starting in the June 18, 1990 issue of Travel Agent Magazine. For further information contact David Zucker at (212) 887-1976.

"Discoveries" is a **Travel Printout** feature designed to give added exposure to all types of travel-related research. To submit your company's travel research projects, send a brief description of the report, including the price, address, and contact name, to **Travel Printout**, U.S. Travel Data Center, 1133 21st Street, Washington, D.C., 20036.

News from the Data Center

In order to better serve Data Center members and subscribers **Travel Printout** will begin, in the June issue, to publish the most up-to-date statistics available in the Travel Price Index (TPI), Current Travel Indicators (CTI) and the Visitor Volume at National Park's series.

As statistics have become available in a more timely matter, the Data Center saw the opportunity to provide the latest statistics to its membership.

The Data Center will begin to publish the latest statistics with the June issue of Travel Printout, which will include two sets of the TPI, CTI and Visitor Volume at National Parks. If you have any questions or comments contact Scott Dring at (202) 293-1040.

USTDC OPENS BOOKSTORE AT POW WOW

For the first time, the Data Center will be selling publications, memberships and other material at the Travel Industry Association's annual Pow Wow on June 2-6, 1990 in Orlando, Florida.

TIA's Pow Wow has become the most successful marketplace for selling Visit USA anywhere. More than 3,500 people attended the 1989 Pow Wow and sales reached more than $1.3 billion.

"It is a great opportunity to increase awareness of the Data Center on an international scope," said Bob McClure, director of Marketing and Membership.

For more information on the bookstore contact Julie Bowers at (202) 293-1040.

Visitor Volume at National Parks

Region	FEB 1990 visits	% Change from FEB 1989	Year to Date % Change 1990/89*
NEW ENGLAND	272,726	-3.5%	-10.8%
MIDDLE ATLANTIC	856,040	-7.9	-0.7
SOUTH ATLANTIC	3,339,357	27.6	0.0
EAST SOUTH CENT.	1,298,010	11.1	9.1
EAST NORTH CENT.	222,251	-17.3	-11.0
WEST NORTH CENT.	185,340	15.8	6.9
WEST SOUTH CENT.	535,186	25.9	14.1
MOUNTAIN	1,417,524	2.5	4.8
PACIFIC	2,597,964	0.5	8.8
TOTAL	10,724,398	9.2	4.0

* Percent change figures may not be consistent with those previously reported due to National Park Service revisions.

Census regions: New England: Conn., Maine, Mass., N.H., R.I., Vermont. Middle Atlantic: N.J., N.Y., Penn. S. Atlantic: Del., District of Columbia, Fla., Ga., Md., N. C., S.C., Va., W. Va. East South Central: Ala., Ky., Miss., Tenn. East North Central: Ill., Ind., Mich., Ohio, Wis. West North Central: Iowa, Kan., Minn., Mo., Neb., N.D., S.D. West South Central: Ark., La., Okla., Texas. Mountain: Ariz., Colo., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N.M., Utah, Wyo. Pacific: Alaska, Calif., Hawaii, Ore., Wash.

Current Travel Indicators - 1989-90

	Month	Value	Units	Percent Change Last Month	Year Ago	Year To Date
Establishment Receipts or Retail Sales						
Hotels, Motels, Other Lodging Places(1)	Feb	$ 5,465	million	19.0	11.8	10.0
Eating and Drinking Places(2)	Feb	$14,196	million	1.4	3.8	2.7
Gasoline Service Stations(2)	Feb	$ 9,405	million	-0.8	8.9	10.4
Commercial Lodging Demand						
Hotel/Motel Occupancy Rates(3)	Feb	64.0	percent	0.8	3.7	3.8
Real Demand for Commercial Lodging(4)	Feb	61.0	million	22.5	7.4	4.6
Airline Passenger Traffic (5)						
Domestic Revenue Passenger-Miles	Feb	23.7	billion	-3.5	4.5	3.2
Int'l Revenue Passenger-Miles	Feb	7.1	billion	-16.5	21.0	19.5
Highway Traffic Volume (6)						
Rural Arterial Passenger-Miles	Feb	35.7	billion	-6.9	6.9	5.1
Rail Passenger Traffic (7)						
Amtrak Passenger-Miles	Feb	409.9	million	-4.2	-0.2	-1.9
Travel Price Index (1982 - 84 = 100) (8)	Feb	130.9		1.5	7.2	7.1
U.S. Resident Travel						
Total Person-trips(9)	Feb	67.1	million	-20.4	6.0	6.0
Vacation Person-trips(9)	Feb	40.9	million	-31.3	-0.7	7.8
Total Person-nights(10)	Feb	255.0	million	-31.3	n/a	n/a
Vacation Person-nights(10)	Feb	176.0	million	-38.4	n/a	n/a
Public Use of National Parks (11)						
Visits	Feb	10,724,398		-1.9	9.2	3.1
Overnight Stays	Feb	460,132		20.6	11.5	7.1
Foreign Arrivals to the U.S.						
From Overseas(12)	Jan	1,008,200		-13.0	14.6	14.6
From Canada(13)	Feb	937,600		-12.7	14.0	17.1
From Mexico(12)	Jan	80,468		-38.7	-0.6	-0.6
U.S. Citizen Departures						
To Overseas(12)	Nov	1,037,700		-7.4	0.5	1.6
To Canada(13)	Feb	452,048		10.9	1.3	1.9
Domestic Demand for Gasoline						
Barrels/Day(14)	Feb	6,799	thousands	1.0	-4.2	-2.1

(1) Source: Smith Travel Research, seasonally adjusted. (2) Preliminary; revised monthly. Source: Bureau of the Census. (3) Source: Smith Travel Research, seasonally adjusted, 1986 and 1987 data have been revised. (4) Smith Travel Research, unadjusted room nights sold. (5) Preliminary; U.S. scheduled service air carriers. Source: Air Transport Association. (6) Preliminary; revised monthly. Source: Federal Highway Administration. (7) Source: National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak). (8) Source: U.S. Travel Data Center and Bureau of Labor Statistics. (9) Source: U.S. Travel Data Center. (10) U.S. Travel Data Center. Data is not comparable to earlier published numbers due to revised methodology. (11) Preliminary; unadjusted for differences in reporting units. Source: National Park Service. (12) Source: U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration. Mexican data reflect 194 arrivals only. (13) Statistics Canada. (14) Preliminary; Source: U.S. Department of Energy.

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